

## Message Text

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ACTION MMO-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 FSI-01 OPR-01 A-01 ABF-01

/027 W

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R 211305Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8077

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 11828

LIMDIS

FOR M/MO - MR. SOHM FROM NORLAND

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AFSI OGEN EG

SUBJECT: FSI LANGUAGE SCHOOL

1. RECENT TELEGRAPHIC TRAFFIC ON FSI ARABIC LANGUAGE PROGRAM APPEARS TO REFLECT PAINFUL PROCESS OF EXTRACTING DEPT DECISIONS ON ARABIC LANGUAGE TRAINEES FROM BEIRUT, A SUBJECT THAT DOMINATED OUR VISIT TO TUNIS. MAJOR ISSUE WAS HOW INITIAL EVACUATION ORDERS FROM BEIRUT CALLING FOR EVACUATION GOT SWITCHED TO TRANSFER. THIS IN TURN TOUCHED OFF DEBATE ABOUT TEMPORARY LIVING ALLOWANCE, SPECIAL POST ALLOWANCE ETC. A DEBATE RESOLVED, AFTER 3 WEEK DELAY, IN FAVOR OF SPECIAL COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE (SCOLA) DESCRIBED IN DEPT'S MESSAGE DATED NOVEMBER 15. EMBASSY TUNIS DID WELL IN CONTAINING LIVELY DISCONTENT AND THEREBY HELPING TO AVERT POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING PROBLEMS.

2. NEVERTHELESS, AFTER FULL EXPLANATION OF SCOLA GIVEN TO THE GROUP, A DELEGATION OF TWO STUDENTS SAYING THEY REPRESENTED ALL TRAINEES ASKED TO SEE ME LATE EVENING NOVEMBER 19 TO SAY THE GROUP WANTED TO (A) RECORD FIRMLY THEIR CONCLUSION THAT THE SCOLA IS INEQUITABLE AND (B) THEIR DESIRE TO HAVE SOMEONE PLEASE LOOK INTO IT. THE INEQUITY IN THEIR EYES IS EVIDENT IN THE FACT THAT, DEPENDING UPON WHETHER SINGLE OR WITH CHILDREN, SOME TRAINEES

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WILL GET \$1 PER DAY, WHILE OTHERS WILL GET OVER \$100 PER DAY--

DIFFERENCES WHICH NO OTHER ALLOWANCES WILL EQUALIZE. I  
PROMISED TO SEND THEIR PLEA ALONG.

3. PART OF THE BACKGROUND, OF COURSE, IS THAT DEPT'S CREDIBILITY  
WAS IMPAIRED BY SWITCH IN ORDERS NOTED PARA 1 ABOVE AND BY  
FACT THAT THEIR PAYCHECKS RECEIVED NOVEMBER 18 STILL CONTAINED  
DEDUCTIONS FOR BEIRUT QUARTERS WHICH THEY HAD LEFT SEVERAL WEEKS  
EARLIER.

4. ONE FINAL POINT: MARHEINSEN AND I WERE BOTH STRUCK BY HOW  
RAPIDLY A CONSENSUS WAS DEVELOPING AMONG TRAINEES, TEACHERS  
AND EMBASSY TUNIS (LATTER REFLECTING FAVORABLE GOT REACTIONS)  
TOWARD CONSIDERATION OF TUNIS AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO CAIRO  
AND WASHINGTON AS LOCATION OF FSI ARABIC TRAINING PROGRAM.  
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